

boots and lasting boots have been the object of the Militia Department, but have we succeeded in getting any further knowledge in the planning of a boot which permits of a full range of movement of the foot and, at the same time, acts as an efficient protection, or has the manufacturer been the arbiter of such questions?

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CAPTAIN F. A. C. SCRIMGER, V.C., M.D.

**I**T is nearly a year since the heroic action of our troops at Ypres and Langemarck won for the name of Canadians a dignity and a sacrificial lustre undimmed by comparison with the greatest deeds of history. As is well known, the fiercest part of the struggle and the heaviest casualties were shared by the 13th and 14th Battalions, units raised in Montreal, numbering among their officers Major E. C. Norsworthy and Captains Guy Drummond, C. N. Williamson, W. C. Brotherhood, and C. F. Stacey.

Some two months later the news reached Canada that the opportunities for the exercise of skill and devotion which the terrible occasion offered, had brought to the medical officer of the 14th Battalion, himself a Canadian, the high honour of the Victoria Cross. A wounded officer, Captain MacDonald, of London, Ontario, whose life Captain Scrimger saved under circumstances of peculiar physical strain, made the facts known, and on July 21st, the doctor was summoned to Windsor, and received the decoration, pinned on by the King's own hand.

The event was mentioned at the time in the *JOURNAL*, but the full details have not reached our readers. Captain MacDonald's own account, given to Windermere, was published in the *Montreal Star* on July 16th, 1915, as follows: "I was in the front of the Canadian headquarters staff on April 25th, which was the third day of the terrific St. Julien fighting, when I was hit on the neck and shoulder. I was dragged into a building where Captain Scrimger dressed my

wounds. A few minutes later German shells found the building and set it on fire. The staff were forced to abandon the building and left me there as an apparently hopeless case. But Captain Scrimger carried me out and down to a moat fifty feet in front, where we lay half in the water. Captain Scrimger curled himself round my wounded head and shoulder to protect me from the heavy shell fire, at obvious peril of his own life. He stayed with me till the fire slackened, then got the stretcher bearers and had me carried to the dressing station. This, however, is only one of many incidents of Captain Scrimger's heroism in those awful three days. No man ever better deserved the soldier's highest honour."

The following additional details are taken from a full account recently published in the *British War Weekly* for January 22nd, last: "Of the three Canadian V.C. heroes, Captain Francis Alexander Caron Scrimger, alone lives to wear the bronze medal. Throughout the fierce fighting of April 22nd to 25th, at St. Julien, Captain Scrimger displayed continuously day and night the greatest devotion to duty among the wounded. On the afternoon of the 25th, the fighting was very fierce, and the brave Canadian doctor had his hands full attending to the wounded. He was in charge of an advance dressing station in some farm buildings. The enemy commenced a very heavy bombardment of the temporary hospital, and the inmates were in imminent risk of being killed. Captain Scrimger remained perfectly cool and was able to quiet the fears of his wounded charges. He gave orders for their removal and went about apparently wholly unconcerned amid the falling shells assisting the orderlies. A Canadian officer, Captain MacDonald, was standing in front of a stable when he was hit on the neck and shoulder. Captain Scrimger saw him fall and promptly dragged him into the building, where he dressed his wounds which were serious. Rather than leave the officer to die there the gallant doctor carried him out and down to a moat in front where they lay half under water (on the side of an

earth bank) where he protected the wounded officer from falling earth which threatened to bury them. They were under heavy shell fire all the time. When the fire slackened he went out to find the stretcher bearers and brought them back and they removed Captain MacDonald to the safety of a dressing station."

It will be seen from the above statements, which are accurate in all details, that the value of Captain Scrimger's action lay not only in the fact that he shielded with his own body the person of a wounded man, supporting by his back through several hours the wall of the falling trench, but also, in the concluding words of the announcement of the *London Official Gazette* of the honour bestowed upon him, that during the three days during which the battle raged he "displayed continuously day and night the greatest devotion to duty." Since then he has remained at the front sharing the dangers and the opportunities of the firing line, until recently invalided to London by an attack of blood poisoning from which he is fortunately recovering.

Captain Scrimger is the son of the late Rev. John Scrimger, D.D., Principal of the Presbyterian College in Montreal, and is a graduate and member of the Teaching Staff of McGill University.

There are undoubtedly many others of our medical men who have done, unnoticed, deeds of equal service in the great extremity to which they are called at the present time, but Captain Scrimger's action stands out as an example of the real meaning of the heroism by which the Victoria Cross is won. A son of the Scottish manse, he has been true to the tradition of his fathers, and has shown those qualities of quiet devotion to duty, cool presence of mind, physical endurance, and forgetfulness of self, which together constitute the high virtue of manliness and which are the legitimate outcome of the daily task well done.